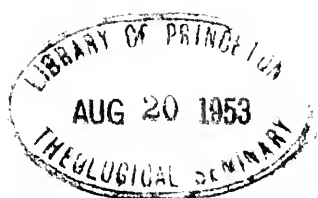


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The Reverend
Talbot Wilson Chambers

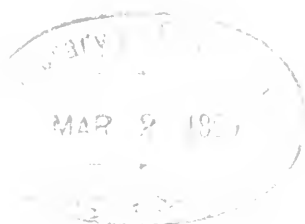
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Faithfully Yours
T. W. Chambers



he Reverend Talbot Wilson
Chambers, S.T.D., LL.D.,
by the Reverend J. Preston
Searle, D.D.



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THE REVEREND TALBOT WILSON CHAMBERS, S.T.D., LL.D.*

SUMMARY OF EVENTS.

TALBOT WILSON CHAMBERS was born at Carlisle, Pa., on the 25th of February, 1819, and was the third in a family of nine children. His parents were W. C. Chambers, M.D., and Mary Ege. He was baptized June 6, 1819. He entered Dickinson College in his native town when eleven years of age. On May 15, 1831, he was received into the full communion of the Presbyterian Church of Carlisle. In the spring of 1832 he entered the Sophomore class of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J., from which institution he graduated in 1834, sharing with two others the second honor in a class of twenty. The year following graduation from college he spent in the theological seminary at New Brunswick. His diary indicates that a few weeks in the middle of the year following were also spent in New Brunswick, when sickness interrupted his studies. The middle year of the seminary course was taken by him at Princeton in 1836-37. At the close of this year he was offered the benefit of a three years' scholarship, as having shown the "most zeal and ardor in the study of sacred and Oriental literature." This he was obliged to decline. From the fall of 1837 to the spring of 1839 he was engaged in private teaching in Vicksburg, Natchez and Oakly, Miss., family losses making this necessary in order to support himself and a younger brother. During this period he was, on the 21st of October, 1838, licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Clinton, at Clinton, Miss. On October 1, 1839, he accepted the call of the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Raritan, at Somerville, N. J., beginning his ministerial service on October 13, and being ordained and installed on the 22d of January, 1840, just before he became of age. On May 21, 1841, he

* The author, in addition to acknowledgments made in the course of this article, wishes to express his very great obligations for material or aid in its preparation, to the Rev. D. D. Demarest, D.D., LL.D., the Rev. J. F. Mesick, D.D., the Rev. J. M. Ferris, D.D., John C. VanDyke, LL.D., the Rev. B. B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D., and especially to the Rev. E. B. Coe, D.D., LL.D., and the Rev. Theodore F. Chambers.

THE REV. TALBOT WILSON CHAMBERS. S.T.D., LL.D.

married Louisa Mercer Frelinghuysen, a member of his church, and a descendant of the Rev. Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, who was the apostle of the Raritan Valley and the progenitor of a family famous in the history of New Jersey for noble service to Church and State. He became one of the pastors of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church of New York city, on December 2, 1849, and remained in this position throughout his life. The manifold and responsible labors of this pastorate were discharged in connection with many others, relating to the work of education and to the progress of the Church at large, of which more detailed mention will be made elsewhere. He received the honorary degree of S.T.D. from Columbia College in 1853, and that of LL.D. from his *Alma Mater* in 1888. In June, 1892, his wife was taken from him by death, and on the 3d of February, 1896, he himself fell on sleep. His grave is in Somerville, N. J. Nine children survive the parents,* and two have passed on before them.

ANCESTRY AND EDUCATION.

About the year 1720, three brothers of Scotch descent, bearing the name Chambers, came from the county Antrim, Ireland, to this country. John settled in Trenton, N. J. Rowland and Ronald found homes near Harrisburg, Pa. From one of these two Dr. Chambers was descended. They were of the stock which has done so much for Pennsylvania, for Presbyterianism and for freedom in this country. They received from their fathers and transmitted to their children blood which had been persecuted for the faith, and which was instinct with love of truth and with indomitable courage in its defense.

Dr. Chambers' own father was a graduate of Dickinson, a cultured and influential physician, who was made an elder of the Carlisle Church a little more than two years after his public confession of faith. He was an active Christian and very faithful in the religious education of his children. Dr. Chambers' mother was a descendant of Michael Ege, who came to this country in 1738, perhaps from Mannheim, Germany. Her father, also bearing the name of Michael, was a wealthy iron manufacturer, and at his death his daughter received a considerable portion of his estate. The loss of this, however, which took place before the completion of the education of the children, combining perhaps with his ill-health, led to the interruption of the student's life at Princeton, and, as already mentioned, to the efforts at teaching in the South.

* These are Frederick F., Arthur D., the Rev. Theodore F., Talbot R., M.D., John F., Louise S. (Mrs. DeWitt Knox), Hilary R., Catherine V. N., and Sarah F. (Mrs. A. L. Moore).

The mother, however, brought something more abiding and more valuable than wealth into the home. In the few glimpses we have of her she appears, notwithstanding her son's innate love of learning, as a distinct and potent influence with him to faithful study, and, better than this, to the faithful performance of the daily duties of personal religion. That she was his much trusted counselor appears also from the pages of his diary.

The young student's first teachers in the classics were the Rev. Joseph Mahon, the Rev. John M. Krebs, D.D., and John A. Inglis, LL.D. During his college life two influences seem to have been predominant over all others in their operation upon him. The lesser of these was a college literary society, into the activities of which he promptly entered and largely shared. A company of brilliant young men destined to eminence in various directions were at that time in the membership of the society. Dr. Chambers often recurred to his association with them as one of the most happy and helpful experiences of his early days, and doubtless he here laid the foundation of the parliamentary resource, aptitude and effectiveness which gave him so much of his power and distinction in all sorts of assemblies of men.

The greater of these influences was the influence of one man, Alexander McClelland. Dr. McClelland was the Professor of Metaphysics and Belles Lettres in Dickinson from 1815 to 1822, becoming in the latter year Professor of Languages in Rutgers College. In 1833, in addition to the college professorship, he was made Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature in the theological seminary, then conducted in the same building with the college. He was eccentric and a sufferer from disease, but a man of broad and profound scholarship, a forceful genius and a great teacher, while his pulpit fame lingers in many memories to-day. The impression made by him on the Carlisle community was such that a number of young men shortly after he had removed to New Brunswick followed him thither. Among these, the parents of young Chambers, warm admirers of Dr. McClelland, sent their son, committing him to the doctor's especial guardianship.

The methods of this teacher were his own. For the dull or idle student they were drastic in their severity. He was utterly intolerant alike of careless mistakes or slavish memorizing. He insisted upon thoroughness of research on the student's part and clearness and precision in the results of study. Of his teaching, Dr. Chambers afterwards wrote: "He roused and stimulated the entire intellectual nature. He got out of his students all that was in them. The discipline was sometimes rough, and not infrequently a sharp word cut into the bone, but the result was worth all that it cost.

The young men learned habits of attention, of patient thought, of precision, of intellectual honesty and of patience. . . . Even dull plodders were quickened into animation, while brighter natures were kindled into a glow of enthusiasm which left its mark upon all their subsequent careers." "I owed more to him than to any other man, living or dead," he has elsewhere said.

The lad was assuredly fortunate in coming, while still very young and when his habits of study were as yet unformed, under the tuition of a master of his subject and of the teacher's art, who lived that he might teach, and in escaping thereby the crude and listless experimentation of the average preparatory school-teacher, who is too often only seeking to bridge over the financial chasm between his own student life and a professional career—who teaches that he may live. That the pupil was worthy of his teacher, Dr. McClelland's own emphatic testimony and the pupil's whole subsequent career abundantly evidence. The capacity of the one was commensurate with the training of the other, for while the teacher perhaps failed in the efforts he made directly to develop the mind of the scholar on the side of the imagination, the better poise and superior control of the other great powers of the latter more than made compensation.

His seminary course was incomplete, and the two years of this course which he did secure were separated by an interval of a year and were passed in two institutions. The junior year brought him in contact still, and now almost exclusively, with Dr. McClelland, whose skill in teaching Hebrew found the best of its many monuments in Dr. Chambers' scholarship. At Princeton he felt, though for a comparatively short time, the impress of other great men, the Alexanders, Miller, Hodge, and gratefully breathed the spiritual atmosphere in which they taught and lived.

The trend of dogmatic thought in both these seminaries, however, was in conflict with another powerful influence affecting him, and, while in the end the seminary influence, aided by his native cast of mind, prevailed, the result was slowly reached, and for a long time at least was a somewhat modified one. The great controversy in the Presbyterian Church which resulted in the temporary but sharply accentuated division into the Old and New School branches was on. Dr. Chambers' pastor, the only one he ever had, the Rev. Dr. George Duffield, was a pronounced New School man. The great majority of his people followed his leadership, more perhaps on account of personal attachment than intellectual persuasion, and most devoted among them were the members of the Chambers family. So far as the ecclesiastical processes against Dr. Duffield and his leader, Dr. Barnes, are concerned, Dr. Cham-

bers shared in the sympathies of his family, and continued so to do even after he had felt his way to the doctrinal position of the Old School party. That there was some hesitation about entering the New Brunswick Seminary, due to this inner conflict, is possible. It also may have caused the interval between the years at New Brunswick and Princeton. It was a partially unsettled conflict when he was seeking licensure, for difficulties were in his way due to his expressed "inability to adopt without further examination the imputation of Adam's sin and the doctrine of limited atonement." And when the result was reached so far as his views of doctrine were concerned, the young licentiate, it is certain, turning aside from flattering offers made him, sought a settlement in the Church which was enriched and strengthened by the service of his entire after-life, as a refuge from the doctrinal and personal strife prevailing in the Church of his birth.* In his later years he came to feel that this conflict, ecclesiastical as well as doctrinal, had been productive of great good in clarifying the theological atmosphere, and in stimulating the missionary and other activities of the Presbyterian Church.

A word of tribute ought to be written here to the influence of his pastor upon Dr. Chambers' life. It is difficult at this distance to define this influence, but that it was not slight is seen in his expressions of affection for Dr. Duffield, and in the fact that within a few years four such men as Robert P. Lee, George W. Bethune, William H. Campbell and Talbot W. Chambers, all from the Carlisle Church, entered the ministry of Jesus Christ.

THE SCHOLAR.

Dr. Chambers was always and preëminently a preacher of the Gospel, but in the charge given him at his ordination by the Rev. Dr. Messler, one sentence was spoken the suggestion of which was most thoroughly in accord with his own views, and in accord with it his whole life was to be brought. "Remember, my young brother, that the lights of the Church were great students, and not great visitors." Scholarship for him must and did underlie all his

* In an address at the centennial of the Carlisle Presbytery in 1886, Dr. Chambers said: "Fifty years ago the conflict between the Old School and the New was at its height, and you will allow me a word as to my personal relations to it. My father's family were all on the New School side, while my convictions led me to the other. The feeling of the parties was intense and bitter. Differences ran through Presbyteries and congregations, and neighborhoods and families, and even social relations became strained and difficult. When I entered the ministry, the case was trying. I was not willing to go into the New School, nor could I grieve my kindred by going into the Old. I shunned the rocks on either hand by entering the Dutch Church which I had come to know by being a student at New Brunswick, N. J."

other activities. He was a precocious, an indefatigable, a lifelong student. Biblical, linguistic and theological studies most attracted him, but did not absorb him. He read much and in many lines. A calm thoroughness, a clear vision and an incessant industry characterized his intellectual life. A tenacious memory and a well-disciplined mind made the fruitage of his reading always and instantly available. A remarkable incapacity for mental fatigue greatly aided him. When other men would have been wearied with much reading, to rest himself he read again. His wife, passionately fond of fishing, believing in the needed benefits of this form of recreation for him and wishing to enlist him in its undoubted delights, tried to awaken a taste for the sport in her husband, but the efforts thus made resulted in failures as amusing as they were complete. It was not safe to leave the unwilling fisherman alone, lest his attention should be absorbed from the fish perhaps struggling on his hook to the Greek Testament which was his invariable companion.

As a boy of eighteen he reads "that queer old writer, Sir Thomas Browne, who delights me much," and Dr. Channing, whose "style is glorious, but the doctrine damnable, although urged in the kindest manner and in the most conciliatory spirit." In the same year he reads one canto of Tasso a day. He "pants for Dante." He slowly wends his way through Chillingworth's "massive pages." He buys Gil Blas and Don Quixote in the original, and begins Tacitus. Montaigne, and Milton's *Apology for Unlicensed Printing* interest him, together with Hall and Taylor and Euripides. Thus he began building with varied but choice material on the foundation laid in his college days. His plan for daily work included the reading of Hebrew before breakfast and Greek before dinner. In later life the Greek Testament found its place, in the daily routine, alongside the Hebrew in the earlier hour, on account of the greater quiet he could then secure. That this was no abbreviated hour is seen from the fact that he always rose as early as six o'clock and frequently at half-past four.

As to the outcome of this life of study we know in part that he possessed a critical knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German and Dutch, and a wide acquaintance with the literature of these languages. He also read Arabic, Syriac, Italian and Spanish. "He was well acquainted with general history, especially familiar with Church history, and minutely conversant with the history of the Reformed Church in Europe and this country." * The history of Christian doctrine and of the controversies in which it was developed, and that of the critical controversies of the present to their

* Rev. E. B. Coe, D.D., LL.D., in *Memorial Discourse*.

roots in the past were at his command. He had a wide knowledge of hymnology. He knew his Bible best of all. Insight, discrimination, accuracy, the marks of a true scholar, characterized his every utterance. Among the hundreds of his articles lying before the writer not one is superficial or hastily considered. It is doubtful if since early boyhood he ever spoke or wrote an obscure sentence.

And so he was fitted to become "a most important member," "of unfailing help to his brethren," as Dr. Green and Dr. Osgood respectively testify, in the company of Old Testament Revisers, although the only pastor in that body of learned specialists; and it was he whom this company selected to put before the public the explanation of their labors which should introduce the great result to the intelligent consideration of the lovers of the Book. He filled in emergencies and with complete acceptance to students and professors the Chairs of New Testament Exegesis at Princeton, Union, Hartford and New Brunswick. He taught dogmatic theology in the last-named seminary during the illness of Prof. Van Zandt, upon the basis of the lectures of the latter. He lectured upon "The Law" at Lane. He was chairman for many years of the important Committee on Versions of the American Bible Society. His many writings attest the high degree of his scholarship in their almost every line.

THE AUTHOR.

Dr. Chambers wrote but few books. *A Memorial of Theodore Frelinghuysen*; a sketch of the *Noon-Day Prayer Meeting* in Fulton street; an *Exposition of the Prophecies of Amos and Zechariah* in Lange's "Commentary," which had its beginning, so far as the latter prophecy was concerned, in a course of sermons preached in his first pastorate; *The Psalter: A Witness to the Divine Origin of the Bible*, which contains his lectures on the Veldt foundation, delivered at New Brunswick in 1876; and the *Companion to the Revised Old Testament*, which, while disclaiming any purpose of being a plea for the Revision's acceptance, is yet an unanswerable one for its consideration: these make up the list of the more formal publications distinctly his. Nevertheless he was one of the most prolific writers of the American Church, outside the professional editor's chair. Many of the articles in the *Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, edited by Dr. Samuel Macauley Jackson, are from his pen. His editorial articles in the *Christian Intelligencer* and the *New York Observer*, his signed articles, and signed and unsigned notices of books in these papers, and in many others both religious and secular, and in magazines and

reviews, including especially the PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW, his occasional papers, pamphlets, and sermons published in one way and another, mount in number into the thousands. The articles range from the brief detached paragraph to the extended series or the elaborate discussion, and cover a remarkable diversity of topics.* But there is virility in them all. There is no mistaking the points their author intended making. Sometimes, indeed, the pen is a rapier; sometimes it drops a caustic; but it is the valiant champion of some great cause, or a kindly surgeon, never a cruel enemy to any man, who holds the pen. Their English is undefiled. The *magnum opus* which he hoped to make, sketched in his lectures upon "The Law" at Lane Seminary, did not reach the publisher's hands before his death. It is much to be desired that the science of Christian ethics, to which English-speaking Christianity has made such meagre literary contribution, be not thereby deprived of this important work.

But though Dr. Chambers diffused his light and influence in productions for the most part fugitive in their character, and has left no adequate literary monument to himself and to his acquirements and abilities, this light and influence have not been lost; nor has the total of his power to uplift and illumine his fellows been in the least diminished. What he has done for the thinking and reading of ministers and private Christians is measureless. He seemingly to us effaced himself in this form of his work, so far as future knowledge of this work as his is concerned; but the work was done; the talents entrusted to him were not buried. We cannot sum up their increase, but the Lord he served knows where to find it all.

THE PRESBYTER AND CO-WORKER.

Much of Dr. Chambers' most effective work was accomplished in the various organized bodies, ecclesiastical and otherwise, to which he belonged. He was a leader of assemblies. In the discussions on the floor, amid the labors of the committee-room, under the responsibilities of a presiding officer, he seemed always to be in his proper element, and best to put forth his energies so as to make them tell upon movements and upon men. In the Classis, Synod, Board, Association, Alliance, although never in any sense a politician, he was always an aggressive force. He

* "Reminiscences of Alexander McClelland," and "Notes on a Journey through the Wilderness of Sinai," both appearing in the *Christian Intelligencer*; "Critical Notes on the Sunday School Lessons," in the *Sunday School Times*, and "Studies in the Psalter," in *The Homiletic Review*, are among the more important of Dr. Chambers' series of articles. He also wrote much in various publications upon questions of Old Testament criticism.

knew how to make the convictions of the one man beget their counterparts and find voice in the votes of the many. He sometimes led minorities, but not often. Nor was this leadership ever striven after. It simply belonged to him. He quickly grasped and weighed the factors in a problem, except its personal ones, and the fact that he knew neither friend nor foe in making up his judgment upon a question aided the well-tested soundness of that judgment in securing trusting followers.

His methods in debate were characteristic of the man. An astute parliamentarian, he knew well how to protect the cause he advocated from the arts of the most skillful tactician without resorting to those arts himself. His main reliance was upon straightforward, incisive argument. The weapons he could use in argument, however, ranged from shrapnel to Saladin's sword, and his attack upon an opponent, especially in his earlier years, sometimes seemed almost destructive in its possibilities if not in its intent. But again, it was the champion of a cause, overpowered by the conviction of its vital right, not the enemy of any man, who made this attack. In later years, when he came to have a profound faith in the stability of the truth, no matter what men might do, and as his whole life mellowed toward the ripened fruit, his methods in controversy mellowed too.

Dr. Chambers, in this character of a leader, performed service of notable value again and again to the Church of his adoption and heartiest love. This is not the place to attempt the review of all the many perplexing questions in our Reformed Church life toward the happy solution of which he made distinct contribution. But the wisdom and efficiency of his leadership at one or two crises belong to a wider history than that of a mere denomination. In 1857, a report, written by his hand and supported by his voice, was adopted by the General Synod which committed the Dutch Church to the independent administration of its Foreign Missions. These previously had been conducted by the American Board. The change was at once productive of a great increase in the missionary interest and effort of the Church, and lies vitally at the foundation of the missionary enterprise, by no means insignificant in its proportions and its results, carried on ever since by this comparatively small body of Christians. In 1867 the Church was agitated by the culmination of a movement to drop the word "Dutch" from its title. It has been suspected that this was intended to be the first step in a process which should bring about the extinction of the separate existence of the denomination. Dr. Chambers fought this proposition with all his resource and zeal. He was defeated; but in his struggle, unsuccessful as to the immediate issue, the

spirit of the whole body was so aroused that the second step in the process, though attempted, was never taken.

Perhaps the greatest service he rendered his own Church was in the practical administration of its Foreign Missions. In his student life * he had consecrated himself to this work for direct service ; but the hand which had closed the pathway for him to any one foreign field, opened others through which his influence should be felt in many such fields, and he was thus enabled to yield an indirect service to the cause of missions far greater perhaps in its reach and its effectiveness than the other could possibly have been. He was for twenty-two years a member of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church, and for the last eight years of his life its President. He had an intimate knowledge of every missionary and of every mission under the Board's care. He brought all his faith and courage as well as his business ability into this form of service. He thus gave inspiration as well as guidance to the Board more than once, when to all others but himself a forward movement seemed an impossibility. His personal gifts to this great work, in their regularity and in their measure, as has transpired since his death, corresponded with his other efforts for its prosecution.

While Dr. Chambers was a loyal denominationalist, no man could be more free from the narrowness of the High Churchman. Believing in the regiment and the necessity of its obedience to its own marching orders, he believed also in the other regiments ranged beside his own, and in the unity of interest and of aim which bound all together in the one great army of the Captain of the Host. He sought something better, truer, than the formal and artificial union of Christian Churches, that is, their spiritual oneness. He was himself a catholic Christian, fraternizing cheerfully and widely with his brethren of other Churches. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and every wise organization of such believers for carrying on their Lord's work, was the object of his sympathetic interest and, so far as was in his power, the beneficiary

* September 1, 1835, the diary contains the following : "I do now, in the sight of God, hereby, after many months' deliberate and prayerful consideration, believing it to be my solemn and bounden duty, devote myself to the service of God, my Creator, Preserver and Redeemer in the Foreign Missionary field, leaving my particular location in His hands and only concerned so to live as will most conduce to His glory as illustrated in the salvation of immortal souls." Later he reviews the reasons for this resolution in detail and reaffirms it. He also began and made some progress in the study of medicine to fit himself for the missionary work. The subsequent precarious state of his health absolutely prohibited the carrying out of this resolution, if no other difficulties, as may have been the case, existed.

of his active endeavors. To the great agencies for uniting the resources of various Christian denominations in common effort for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, he gave time, labor, and the best that was in him, unstintedly. For years he was a Manager of the American Bible Society, in addition to his services as Chairman of its Committee on Versions already noted, while he never lost an opportunity, and went often out of his way to make opportunities, for advocating the claims of this magnificent missionary agency upon churches and Christians of whatever name. He gave to the American Tract Society most valuable service as a member and then as Chairman of its Publishing and Executive Committees. He was an active friend of the Evangelical Alliance. In the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System the efficiency of his devotion was recognized by his being made President of the Western Section, and then President of the Alliance, a position, as all know, occupied by him at the time of his death.

In educational matters, too, this same capacity for action with other men was conspicuously exhibited. He was an efficient Trustee of Rutgers College from 1868, and of Columbia College from 1881. He was Chairman of the committee which selected most of the books contained in the Sage Library at New Brunswick; and his other services, official and unofficial, to both the theological seminaries of the Reformed Church will long be gratefully remembered.

He was also, as Senior Pastor of the Collegiate Church, a Manager of the Presbyterian Hospital, and of the Leake and Watts Orphan House. He belonged to many other organizations, literary, historical, etc., and from all these come testimonies to his faithfulness and effectiveness in advancing their various objects. Doubtless he here again diffused his influence so as to leave no index to its volume or measure of its rich value or lasting reminder of the personal source in which divine grace generated it. But this influence was not thereby dissipated. It is not lost to the Master-Workman's eye.

THE PASTOR AND THE PREACHER.

As a pastor, Dr. Chambers was not a "great visitor." The temptation to become a social gadabout, a sort of professional entertainer of other people's guests, which often besets the young rural minister, probably never appealed to him. It was certainly successfully resisted if it did. On the other hand, he was never a timid or selfish recluse. He was systematic and scrupulously diligent in the oversight of the spiritual condition of each member of

his churches. He believed that in the great book of human nature were hidden rich treasures of knowledge, and that in the Gospel of which he was a minister was a remedy for all the ills of the human heart. So he conscientiously sought out the men and women and children entrusted to his pastoral care, that he might know them and might prove himself unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing to men individually the Word of truth. The lonely cottage on the mountain side, the hut of the neglected negro, the almshouse, the squalid tenement, and the luxuriant home have all echoed to his kind but most direct admonition, to his words of consolation, to his simple, earnest prayers; and from all these have preceded him into the glory beyond, precious souls which shall shine as stars in his crown of rejoicing. His sagacity and energy in leading the collective flock, whether in the country village or the great city, have their demonstration in tangible facts. The labors of the youthful preacher in the infancy of the Second Church of Somerville, now one of the strongest churches of its denomination, are acknowledged as "labors which laid broad and deep the foundations of its present prosperity." The Collegiate Church has put on record its appreciation of his value "in the conduct of its affairs" as a value which can "hardly be estimated."

As a maker of sermons he was an exceedingly conscientious workman. He put hard study into the substance and the arrangement of every one, whether completely written or sketched in elaborate and full outline, as was the case of most of those prepared in his later years. The result was always lucid, orderly, succinct, and so analyzed, illustrated and pointed that even the careless hearer would carry away a definite idea of the whole sermon. The general method of his sermonizing was a combination of the expository with the topical, the analogy of the faith never being forgotten. He sought, under the constantly remembered power of the Holy Spirit, to instruct in the truth, and to persuade the will chiefly through the reason. His own emotional nature being under rigid control, he made only rare and brief appeals to that nature in others. Whatever imagination he possessed found little voice in his sermons. He saw things as they were with such close approach to exactness, he so felt the power and beauty of the truth in itself, that in preaching this truth a flight of imaginative rhetoric would have seemed to him to have been an almost impious distortion or obscuration of the divine message. In the almost purely intellectual character of his preaching lay one of his pulpit limitations, so far as the popular audience was concerned. Nevertheless, hearers who were accus-

to his methods, who were careful Bible students, or who possessed some measure of mental discipline such as that even of a body of college undergraduates, restless under a sermon as these last usually are, would feel very quickly the spell of his rich, clear thinking or felicitous diction, and highly appreciated the opportunity of listening to him. But notwithstanding this limitation, his sermons were never dull or cold. His own intense conviction as to the truth, for he never preached above his own experience, put glow and life and heart into them. Nor were his emotions always successfully controlled. Such passages of Scripture as "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," were sometimes repeated by him with tremulous, broken utterance. A devoted parishioner* has written of an attempt the doctor once made to quote the hymn, "I think when I read that sweet story of old," which reached only to the couplet,

"I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arm had been thrown around me,"

when the speaker was wholly overcome.

His manner in the pulpit was dignified without being lifeless, and sometimes became impassioned. His gestures were appropriate, but not profuse. His delivery, in a building adapted to his voice, was conversational, although he knew how to put tremendous emphasis upon his thought when necessity required. But in his voice lay another and the chief limitation preventing a general appreciation of the greatness and the profitableness of his preaching. He was endowed with all the requisites of a Boanerges, except the thunder. His voice was clear and pleasant, but not strong. In forcing it, as he was compelled to do in a large audience-room, the finer modulations were lost, and the effort not being uniformly sustained, words and parts of sentences became indistinct. Voice-building was an unknown art in his seminary days and was perhaps incompatible with the twelve or fourteen hours spent almost daily at his desk and with his books; yet one cannot help regretting that the development of the voice's strength possible for every student of to-day was beyond his reach. His fame and influence as a preacher would then have perhaps eclipsed even those of the scholar. This deficiency he himself felt and regretted.

There was one striking feature of Dr. Chambers' public services in his own Church, mention of which may have special interest for the liturgical student as well as for those attached to the ancient usages of the "Dutch" Church. He retained to the last the *exordium remotum*, and was the only one of our ministers so to

* William L. Brower, Esq.

do. This, as some, but not all, may know, was a brief address preceding the prayer before the sermon, on some subject sufficiently related to that of the sermon to point the thought of the worshiper toward the latter. These addresses, as Dr. Chambers gave them, were often models of compressed but clean-cut and polished extempore speech. Only the abbreviated outline of some of them remain on the inner page of the covers of his manuscripts. His public prayers were those of a man broad in his sympathies, versed in the language of Scripture, strong in faith, and much accustomed to secret supplication.

THE MAN.

Dr. Chambers was slightly under the medium height and was of slender build. His carriage was very erect. The latter was due partly to an early formed purpose to resist at every possible point the approaches of pulmonary trouble, a tendency to which he felt existed. So he worked at a desk which rose from his table level at an angle of at least sixty degrees, and compelled the writer's shoulders to be in the most healthful position. His well-remembered habit of bending slightly backward and filling his lungs to their utmost when walking or engaged in public speech, was due to the same deliberate purpose. His success in the long struggle with this insidious enemy is not without its significance for others. His step was light and firm to the last. The only mark of age in his appearance was the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard. His complexion was the pale one of the student. His face expressed refinement, the habitual exercise of the judgment, the resolution of conviction, and a courage which knew how to be kind but not to flinch.

In social intercourse he was a good listener, and entered into conversation himself only when he had something to say other than the by-play of small talk. But he knew how thus to tone up the conversation of a company without arresting its lively flow or seeming to direct its course. His intellectual gifts have been already measurably indicated. They were accompanied by a native fearlessness which was so complete that it is doubtful if its possessor ever consciously summoned its aid, and by a will so resolute that it would be shaken by nothing except the truth.

What he became upon the basis of the gifts graciously bestowed on him at birth, was due to the early and continuous operation of grace upon the whole man. His surrender in childhood to the Lord Jesus Christ was a surrender to a Master as well as to a Redeemer, and was unreserved. It included every moment of his time and his every power. His diary, which begins when he was

sixteen, reveals a youth already striving daily to realize the matured Christian experience of a Doddridge or Bernard of Clairvaux. The testimony of those who knew him in his student days is clear as to the purity and depth of his piety and his singleness of aim in all that he did. The boy in this case really became the father of the man. If scholarship for him must underlie all his activities, a high spirituality must also be the atmosphere in which they were put forth. The cultivation of this side of his life he made a constant duty, to be as carefully and regularly attended to as the wants of the physical nature. He habitually read his English Bible to aid in this, that no question of scholarship might interfere with the voice from God he sought to hear.

The abiding conviction, inwrought from above, that he was not his own but had been bought with a price, dominated his life and was the key to all that he became, the spring of all that he accomplished. The thoroughness of the consecration he had been enabled to make quickened and uplifted all his gifts. It stimulated his great native industry moment by moment all his days. It imposed on this industry the most carefully adjusted method in work, that nothing of time, of energy, belonging to his Lord, should be wasted. It kept his judgment and will always alert and active in seeking the highest possible development of his talents and their most effective service, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the Master to whom he belonged. It kept him at work with all his might until the end of life. Though long past three score years and ten, he bore multiplied and heavy responsibilities with the willingness of a man in midlife, and accepted new ones with the readiness of one still young. He was faithful unto death.

This conviction made him an uncompromisingly truthful man, to whom accuracy in investigation and expression, and even exactness in his business affairs, were moral obligations and became a second nature; for whom there was nothing expedient but the expediency of naked truth; whose outspoken convictions as to the truth could be modified by no tempest of popular clamor or massing of opponents or menace of any kind; a man so truthful that his judgment was always kept open to new light upon any question whatever, and who, when new light came, was restrained by no traditions, his church's or his own, and by no pride of his own reason, from frankly acknowledging the past mistake and the supplanting truth. "I was wrong and he was right," he has said and written more than once, when the issues raised have been important ones and when his committal to what he afterwards came to believe was error had been public and complete. He was a conservative upon certain theological and notably upon certain critical

questions; not from any fear of results, not from mental habit, not from obstinate self-determination, but from living and renewed conviction resting upon an active judgment intelligent enough and brave enough to discard plausible and popular sophistries for fundamental and enduring principles. In 1877, writing of the Rev. Dr. H. B. Smith, then recently deceased, a man from whom Dr. Chambers differed broadly on many points, but whom he warmly loved, he says: "Like all true students, Dr. Smith revered the past, yet he was not its slave. Thoroughly comprehending its principles and spirit, he pressed forward in the same lines to a fuller and riper development." He here unintentionally describes his own attitude. While he loyally held fast to that which was good, he was as ready in his last years as in his younger ones to "prove all things." In other words, while he was a man of rock-like convictions, these were always convictions and never prejudices. Out of the fullness of his knowledge of the principles and the processes of the destructive school of Biblical criticism, he distrusted and rejected its conclusions. Nor is the future without its promise of complete vindication for some, if not all, of his convictions as to the integrity and historicity of the Word of God.

This dominant conviction made him a very humble and unselfish man. The idea of self when it occurred to him in ordinary conversation or in formal speech seemed always to be in the form of an impersonal conception, a sort of objective entity which thrust itself upon his attention and which might be used, as any other thing, for illustration but never as occasion for boasting. It is true he sometimes appeared tenacious of his personal rights, but this was only when these seemed to him to safeguard principles, or the rights and interests of others. Official responsibilities he never sought, and he welcomed them when they came only for the opportunities they brought with them. For mere honors he cared nothing. Few, indeed, are the men who have succeeded in acquiring the fixed habit of his mind in looking far above the applause of his fellows for the approval of his Master's eye. The "one thing I do" of St. Paul was the one thing he ever sought to do; for to his dying day he counted himself as only a sinful man who had not yet apprehended that for which he had been apprehended by a gracious Saviour.

This dominating conviction led him to victories in the domain of his own heart greater even than those he achieved in the external life. The record of these belongs not here. A single illustration, however, will perhaps be not out of place. Dr. Chambers possessed a naturally quick temper. No one appreciated its presence

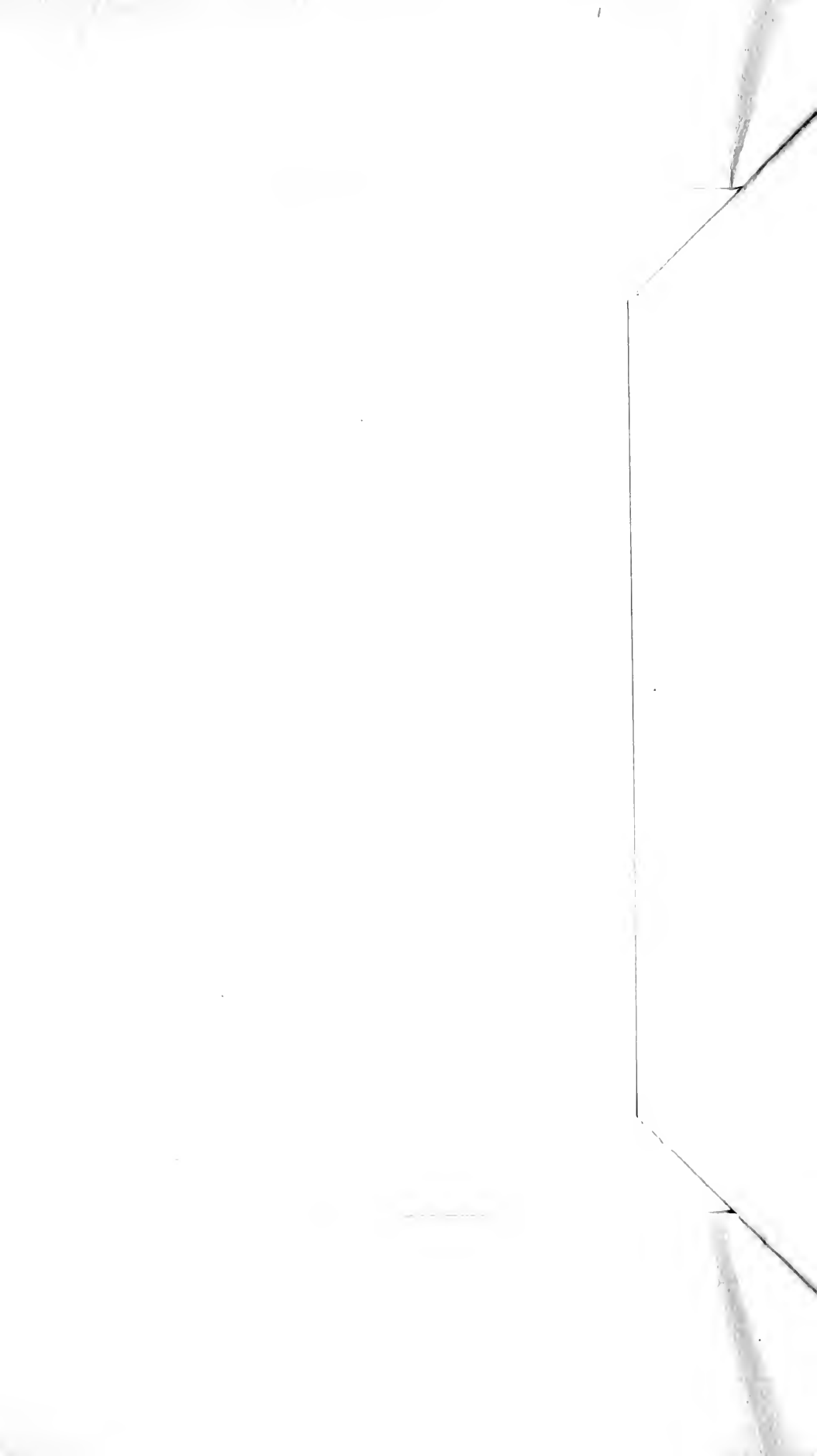
and its danger more than himself. He fought it as an enemy to the nobler self which he, for Christ's sake, desired to become. And in the marvelous sweetness and gentleness of his character under the heaviest strain in his closing years the result of this inner conflict was made clear.

This conviction developed in him great fortitude. Seasons of severe chastening came to him now and then and demonstrated in him a Christian heroism which knew how not only to dare, but also to endure. The hardest stroke fell when he was but partially recovered from dangerous illness himself, and when, at a continent's distance from his home, the wife who had gone forth with him apparently in perfect health to care for him, and of whom he was passionately fond, suddenly sickened and died. If his spirit faltered under the swift, sharp blow, no man ever discovered it. When the long, sad homeward journey with his dead was finished, and the usual hour for family worship came, the travel-worn and stricken husband took his accustomed place as priest at the family altar. The prayer was not the cry of the broken heart within him, but the voicing of a faith that in perfect submission had triumphed over grief, the prayer of a soul which was stayed upon its God and was kept in perfect peace. Nor was this fortitude less conspicuous when the thought of his own death occurred to him, and when the reality manifestly drew near. In death, as in life, he had full persuasion that he was his Lord's.

CONCLUSION.

Viewing Dr. Chambers' long life as a whole, it was one on which the divine favor rested in large degree and with remarkable uniformity. The Lord gave him a true helpmeet in a wife who filled his home and life with the warmth and cheer of a large-hearted, joyous spirit, and she was spared to him until his own course was almost finished. He gave him affectionate children. He gave him friends in all walks of life, and some of the most devoted in his old age were among the young, for he attracted with facility the affection of children. He gave him honors such as in their variety and number come to but few, and which were real indices to the sweep and value of actual influence. He gave him, notwithstanding the large family he indulgently brought up and his more than generous gifts to this form of benevolence and to that, a comfortable competence. He gave him unimpaired vigor of mind, and work to do, until the day of his last brief sickness. And then He gently summoned him into rest.

The ninety-first of the Psalms he loved, describes Talbot Wilson Chambers' career and its end.



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